

COLONIAL RACIAL CAPITALISM AND VIOLENCE: THEORISING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPIRE AND ISRAELI SETTLER COLONIALISM

Muhannad Ayyash¹

Professor of Sociology at Mount Royal University
Canada

ABSTRACT

This article theorises the relationship between empire and Israeli settler colonialism through the interplay between violence and capital accumulation in colonial racial capitalism. It argues that Israel's genocidal violences of land theft is the means and grounds for Israeli and US imperial capital accumulation. This can be observed in the genocidal operation in the Gaza Strip. The first section contextualizes the genocide in the Gaza Strip within a larger structure of genocide. The section highlights the centrality of the conquest of land in the Zionist settler colonial project and how that appealed to the British empire in the early parts of the twentieth century. The second section examines why the US empire has actively participated in the genocide. States in the US imperial bloc essentially reduce the whole question of Palestine to a simple equation where Palestinian liberation does not equate with their own economic interests, while Israeli settler colonialism does. Though there exists a tension between imperial and settler colonial interests around the question of what kind of violence is preferable for capital accumulation, the article concludes by arguing that a transformation of the logics and systems of colonial racial capitalism cannot arise without activism and pressure from below on states and capitalist structures.

1 Muhannad Ayyash, born and raised in Silwan, Al-Quds, is Professor of Sociology at Mount Royal University, Canada. He is the author of *A Hermeneutics of Violence*. He has published academic articles on political violence, vaccine apartheid, anti-Palestinian racism, and Palestinian decolonial movements in the *European Journal of International Relations*, the *European Journal of Social Theory*, *Distinktion*, and *Critical Sociology*. He has co-edited two books, the most recent with Jeremy Wildeman, *Canada as a Settler Colony on the Question of Palestine*. He has published multiple book chapters, and has written opinion pieces for *Al-Jazeera*, *The Baffler*, *Middle East Eye*, *Mondoweiss*, *The Breach*, and *Middle East Monitor*.



SHOUT
SHARE IT

KEYWORDS: Violence, Colonial Racial Capitalism, Settler Colonialism, Imperialism, Genocide

Introduction

This article theorises the relationship between empire and Israeli settler colonialism through the interplay between violence and capital accumulation in colonial racial capitalism. Colonial racial capitalism, which is the story of capitalism everywhere, is an analytic that centralises the necessary interconnections between settler and franchise colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and racism. These interconnections are foundational and ongoing, ‘partition[ing] the globe into racially differentiated lands and peoples, naturalising and justifying the expropriation of some bodies and lands for the benefit of others’ (Koshy et al. 2022: 6). Theft of land and the elimination of Indigenous sovereignties are at the core of colonial racial capitalism. Without the settler sovereign’s ownership of land as commodity, capital relations and labour exploitation do not appear or develop. The violences of colonial racial capitalism across the globe are varied, ranging from genocide, to labour exploitation, to the erasure of cultural identities.

The case of Israeli settler colonialism offers a case study where we can observe a multitude of violences operating simultaneously. Whereas in settler colonial contexts like the United States of America (USA) or Canada, the unleashing of ‘direct force’ maybe held in check unless there is a substantial threat to the functioning of colonial racial capitalism (Koshy et al. 2022: 12), Israel is continuously unleashing direct and brute force on the indigenous Palestinian people robbing them of their lands. Onur Ulas Ince’s concepts of ‘capital-positing’ or generating violences (overt and brute) and ‘capital-preserving’ violences (covert and quotidian) (Ince 2018; Koshy et al. 2022: 8–9) are, in the case of Israel, not just interlinked, and not just concurrently occurring, but just as critically, *circulatory*: that is, capital-positing violences (e.g., colonising lands through organised violence) give rise to capital-preserving violences (e.g., legal and diplomatic normalisation of Israeli settler colonial conquest), which in turn encourage the continuation and expansion of settler colonisation using more capital-positing violences, and so on.

Therefore, Israel’s genocidal violences of land theft and the erasure of Palestinian political existence is the *means and grounds* for Israeli and imperial capital accumulation. The US empire today is an active participant in these circulatory violences. Even if it lightly critiques them from time to time, the US primarily conceals the brutality of Israeli violences. Such a level of active participation suggests that Israel’s genocidal

violences are not the nuisances that despite which, empire economically partners with Israel. Rather, those brutal capital-positing violences are themselves generators of capital (the *means* for capital accumulation), while simultaneously the outcome and promise of those violences is to generate more capital for empire by, among other things, transforming Palestinian lands into a political-economic relation of capitalist ownership (the *grounds* for capital accumulation). In other words, capital-positing violences give rise to and secure a system of capital accumulation to be maintained by capital-preserving violences. This is precisely the appeal and incentive of those economic partnerships between Israel and the US. By examining the confluence of economic interests between the settler colony of Israel and empire (the British and the US empires), this article theorises that Israel's place in global colonial racial capitalism is always predicated on its ever-expansive theft of Palestinian lands. Colonial racial capitalism is a system that continuously encourages Israel to forcefully expropriate more and more Palestinian lands, even as major players within this system from both the Global North and the Global South sometimes rhetorically critique the brutality of Israel's methods of expropriation.

The genocidal operation against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip has revealed these dynamics with clarity. Despite receiving condemnation from the majority of the world's states, the Israeli state has not yet felt substantial material consequences of its genocide. The absence of such consequences is itself evidence of the strength of the global incentive of states to normalise and support Israeli settler colonial conquest. To date, the majority of states in the Global North and South have not cut economic ties with the Israeli state as a result of the genocide. Although there has been a slow movement in that direction by some states, such as Turkey (Akman 2024), there has not been nearly enough. In a nutshell, states in the Global North and South are economic beneficiaries of these brutal genocidal violences. Though it is critical to analyse how and why many states in the Global South continue to be active participants in the genocide of the Palestinians, this article focuses only on the Euro-American imperial center in its analysis.

The first section contextualises the genocidal operation in the Gaza Strip within the structure of genocide that began in the late parts of the nineteenth century with the onset of the Zionist settler colonial project. The section highlights the centrality of the conquest of land in this project and how that appealed to the British empire at the time. The second section examines why the US empire has actively participated in the genocide. States in the US imperial bloc essentially reduce the whole question of Palestine to a simple equation where Palestinian liberation and freedom does not equate with their own economic interests, while Israeli settler colonialism does. Though there exists a tension between

imperial and settler colonial interests around the question of what kind of violence — capital-positing or capital-preserving — is preferable for capital accumulation, the article concludes that a transformation of the logics and systems of colonial racial capitalism cannot arise without activism and pressure from below on states and capitalist structures.

A Structure of Genocide for Land Conquest

In October 2023, the Israeli state has launched a genocidal operation against the Palestinian people. This operation has to be contextualised within a larger ‘structure of genocide’ (Wolfe 2006) that has been ongoing since the late nineteenth century, at the onset of the Zionist settler colonisation of Palestine (Abdo 2024). A structure of genocide refers to an ongoing and systematic project of eliminating indigenous Palestinians, and most importantly Palestinian sovereignty, and replacing them with Jewish Israelis and settler colonial sovereignty. This takes place through various mechanisms, from laws that prohibit Palestinian return to their lands, to urban and city planning projects that cut off Palestinian communities from the land and one another, to cultural efforts to ‘Judaise’ the land and the history of the land, to violent forceful expulsions and home demolitions, and so on. Regardless of the mechanism though, it is always made possible and enforceable through Israeli state violence.

Historically, Palestinian sovereignty did not exist in the mould of Euro-American colonial modernity, but was rather more meaningful. It concerned a relationship between the Palestinian people and the land that viewed the ‘land as life,’ where the land is a kind of receptacle of human life at the same time that this receptacle has an autonomous life and movement of its own (Ayyash 2018). Up until the end of the nineteenth century, the land was largely communally owned on the level of the village. This ‘collective-rural ownership, or *musha‘a*,’ shared the land, its resources, and cultivation among the people of the village (Sabbagh-Khoury 2023: 50–51). Another significant portion of the land was ‘miri’ which ‘were considered state property, but the farmers cultivating them understood their relation to the land as one of effective ownership.’ (Sabbagh-Khoury 2023: 52) Only a very small percentage of land was privately owned, or ‘*mulk*’, or part of ‘Muslim Waqf’ lands (Sabbagh-Khoury 2023: 51–52). This form of collective ownership of the land, where the relationship between land and people was reciprocal in nature (or, where land is considered ‘relationally’ (Koshy et al. 2022: 12), also very much guided the relationship among people living on the land where collective life operated along decentralised logics. In short, this form of sovereignty did not entail capitalist ownership of land, exclusive racial suzerainty (the

right of a country to control another) over the land, or the creation of an absolute and indivisible centralised sovereign power.

Zionist settler colonial sovereignty, on the other hand, does entail all those things. It concerns the establishment of exclusive Israeli Jewish sovereignty over the land, with the ultimate Zionist goal being a messianic 'Greater Israel,' (Pappé 2018: 37–66) which spans all the lands from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea (Masalha 2007). The establishment of the settler colonial state of Israel in 1948 moved the Zionist project from unofficial exclusive sovereignty over a small percentage of these lands to official Israeli Jewish exclusive sovereignty over 78% of Palestine. In 1967, Israel invaded the remaining 22% of Palestine and began to practice unofficial sovereignty over the entirety of the land. Since 1967, Israel has been seeking to realise the dream of Greater Israel by slowly annexing more and more Palestinian lands in the West Bank, claiming full sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, and besieging the Gaza Strip in such a way that we now can clearly see as an attempt to render its population genocide-able.

Land theft, therefore, has always been at the core of the Zionist settler colonial project, as it is the case in all settler colonies (Byrd 2011; Wolfe 2006). Land is crucial not only for the establishment of the settler colonial state and more crucially settler colonial sovereignty, but it is also integral to the creation and expansion of colonial racial capitalism, which is at the core of the Zionist settler colonial project (Abdo 2024). It is critical to underscore that capitalist relations are not simply developed endogenously within Europe and then exported to the settler colony or the colony, but rather they are formed in and through colonial, settler colonial, and imperial relations (Robinson 1983; Bhabra 2021; Koshy et al. 2022). Capital-labour relations are the product of interconnected histories and are rooted in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the extraction of their resources, as well as the commodification of colonised lands, resources, and indeed of people. As made clear in Glen Coulthard's (2014) work, a structure of genocide underpins the formation and advancement of capitalism, and in the settler colony, the structure of genocide explains oppression and liberation, as opposed to traditional Euro-centric political-economy that posits the rise of capitalism as a European event primarily taking place within Europe. This is important to underscore because it allows scholars to better theorise what is so appealing about Israeli settler colonialism to Euro-American imperial powers without analytically subordinating settler colonialism to capitalism. Instead, scholars can theorise how dynamics internal to settler colonialism shape and drive capital accumulation on a world scale and vice versa. Among other things, this theorisation helps illuminate both the affinity and tension between empire and the Israeli settler colony.

Theft of land is necessary for securing Euro-American imperial interests in the region, historically (British empire) and in the present (US empire) (Ajl 2023), as well as securing support from other states that are not necessarily within the orbit of the US imperial hegemony. What Israel continuously promises its imperial allies and other supporters and partners is that land under exclusive Israeli Jewish sovereignty can open up capitalist expansion and growth in ways that would otherwise be unavailable if the land remained inhabited by Palestinians living under a Palestinian Indigenous sovereignty, operating under communal ownership models.

Historically, there are two critical reasons why the British empire supported the creation of a Jewish state in the land of Palestine: first, such an entity would help secure British imperial interests in the region, and second, it would prevent massive migration of Central and Eastern European Jews into the United Kingdom (Kayyali 1977). Like all empires at the time, the British empire was interested in securing its ability to acquire and accumulate resources, secure trade routes such as the Suez Canal, and access to markets in the emerging Arab states (Kayyali 1977). Since the existence of a European structured state in the form of a Zionist entity would be entirely dependent on British imperial support, the Zionist state would essentially become a 'client state' that is loyal to the British (Kayyali 1977: 107–108). Moreover, Zionist settler colonialism essentially set up the infrastructure for long-term imperial capital generation and accumulation, even if it did not produce returns in the short-term (which was often the case in franchise colonialism as well). As Max Ajl (2023: 271) summarises the alliance between Zionist settler colonialism and British imperialism: 'Capitalism is not reducible to mathematical equations but is a history of world-scale accumulation, a process that protects the social and political context for accumulation, thus foreclosing or suppressing alternative forms of organisation.'

The British and the Zionists had different ideas about the size of the Jewish state. Though there existed some internal debates on the question, the dominant strands of the Zionist movement wanted all of Palestine to become the Jewish state. The British favored partition in order to satisfy local and international interests that they did not want to upset and disturb too much. The forcible mass expulsion of the Palestinians from all of Palestine would be harmful to the British empire's reputation, image, and interests, which is why the British empire ultimately favored partition (Sinanoglou 2019). Partition, in other words, was a tool of empire: it would enable the British empire to achieve its primary goal, which is the construction of a European-style Jewish state (Hogan 2020), and somewhat appease Arab interests and aspirations in the region. Critically, this reveals a tension that continues until this day: one between an imperial power that is satisfied with a certain scale of settler colonial conquest

once capital generating systems are operational (and using only capital-preserving violences), and a settler colonial power that is expansionist by its nature (and also using capital-positing violences). This tension continues until this day between Israel and the US empire, as I discuss in the next section.

Zionist settler colonialism and Euro-American imperialism have been joined at the hip since the turn of the twentieth century. Euro-American imperial military and political power as well as their economic capital make possible the Zionist settler colonial project, just as this project then enables the generation of more economic capital and enhances Euro-American imperial power in return. Though the main beneficiaries of Israeli settler colonialism today are the US-led imperial bloc, eventually other states begin to also benefit economically from the Israeli state as a Euro-American structured capitalist state. In the next section I discuss the US empire and its material interests in Israeli settler colonialism, particularly focusing on the genocide in Gaza.

The Genocide in the Gaza Strip and Colonial Racial Capitalism

There are multiple ways in which capital is generated through the 17 year siege of the Gaza Strip, such as the ‘speculative rehabilitative economy’ which extracts value and creates capital from debilitated Palestinian bodies through humanitarian aid networks, the NGO sector, and so on (Puar 2017: 153). What underpins the multitude of capital generating systems in Palestinian territories (for another example, see Da’na 2014), which are secured through capital-preserving violences (such as the checkpoints, the prison system, etc.) is ultimately a structure of genocide in which capital-positing violences forcefully steal lands. In the case of Israel, many of its capital-preserving violences are also capital-positing violences in so far as they conquer more lands. For example, the Colonial Wall can be theorised as a capital-preserving violence in so far as it secures Israel’s 1948 settler colonial conquest (and thus the commodification of those lands) as well as creating Palestinian economic dependence on Israel and its allies, but the Wall also annexes more lands (estimated to be 13% of the West Bank, Erakat 2019: 211). Regardless, there are moments of intensified capital-positing violences where there is mass displacement of Palestinians and a mass conquest of Palestinian lands. The ongoing genocidal operation in the Gaza Strip is an example of such a capital-positing violence, where the settler colonial power seeks to expand its official settler colonial sovereignty over significant areas of Palestinian land, robbing significant number of Palestinians of their sovereignty and/or prospects for a sovereign existence. At the time of writing in June of 2024, Israel has already created a ‘security buffer zone’

that colonises some 32% of the Gaza Strip, and has displaced approximately 85% of the Strip's population, or 1.9 million people (Salhani 2024). The US empire benefits from both Israeli capital-preserving and capital-positing violences, although not without an uneasy tension in its support for each.

After Palestinian armed groups, led by Hamas, launched an armed operation against Israel on October 7, 2023, the US empire fully mobilised its military, economic, political, and diplomatic resources in support of the Israeli settler colony. Among other things, the US sent major military assets such as air craft carriers to the region to provide military cover and support to Israel (Liebermann et al. 2023), they have provided substantial economic aid and weaponry to Israel (*AlJazeera* 2024), suppressed Palestinian solidarity within US politics, culture, media, education and other social institutions (Ayyash 2023b), and have continuously protected Israel from international pressure by using their veto power at the United Nations Security Council (Asrar & Hussein 2023). The US active support has been continuous despite the internal domestic pressure and external diplomatic pressure forming against the US and its role in the genocide. Many are asking, from the right and the left (e.g., Hoffman 2024; Kestler-D'Amours & Stepansky 2024), whether this US decision to blindly support the Israeli genocide makes any rational sense for the US.

On the world stage, the US is being exposed for its double standards, and people and states around the world are persistently pointing out that the US does not stand up for the ideals it claims to stand for. The US is increasingly being seen around the world as a source of instability, violence, war, and oppression, as opposed to being a beacon of democracy, civilisation, and human rights (Baroud 2024; Takahashi 2024). Some have argued that the so-called irrationality of the US decision to unconditionally back Israel can only be explained by the power and influence of the Israel lobby, which is supposedly directing US foreign policy towards a direction that is only beneficial for the Israeli state and at the expense of the US. Such a view, however, ignores the tremendous material benefits that the US empire enjoys as a direct result of the Israeli settler colonial conquest of Palestine. Far from irrational, the US empire is indeed acting along its own material political-economic interests. From within the worldview of the US empire, with its laser focus on global capital accumulation, the US policy path is rational.

The power of the Israel lobby should not be downplayed, but the lobby's work is largely directed towards maintaining the US empire's calculation that Israeli settler colonialism is the best path towards achieving US imperial interests in the region and beyond (for example, see Israel's role as a proxy for US imperialism in Latin America, Munck & Pozzi 2019: 7–9). The lobby does not create those interests, nor does it force the US

onto a path that does not meet those interests. Its primary function is to prevent the US from following a more Arabist path of foreign policy in the region — the ‘Israel is a strategic liability’ doctrine — where the US would largely depend on postcolonial authoritarian Arab regimes to secure its political-economic imperial interests. Whenever politicians, public intellectuals, academics, cultural figures, media personalities, from the left or the right, question Israel’s practices, policies, and ideology, the lobby springs into action to prevent this form of thinking from spreading within US political, cultural, and social institutions. For Israel, so long as it is protected from close public scrutiny through a carrot and stick approach, the idea of abandoning support for Israel because US interests can be better achieved through other means remains out of the realm of possibility in US foreign policy-making.

The Israel lobby is also active in down playing frictions between the US and Israel, but such friction still arises. The US empire is interested in one thing and that is the accumulation of capital on a world scale (Ajl 2023). Although scholars should not downplay the role of ideology in building and maintaining the US-Israel ‘special relationship,’ the material interests between the two is what is primary and essential. Without the confluence of their material interests, the ideological tools that are falsely presented as the foundation of the ‘special relationship’ (e.g., democracy, Western values, human rights, the Judeo-Christian tradition, the fight against antisemitism, etc.) would not suffice in holding up their staunch colonial alliance.

The friction between the US empire and the settler colony of Israel is of a similar order of the friction that has always existed between imperial powers and their settler colonies, which revolves around the question of when settler colonial expansion, that is, capital-positing violences, should cease where the settler state now focuses solely on capital-preserving violences (Veracini 2010). The imperial power is often satisfied with using capital-preserving violences once capital-positing violences have secured the settler colony. That is, once capital-positing violences have created and secured the settler colony where it starts to produce capital for the imperial power, the imperial power prefers to maintain the smooth operation of this capital-generating system. In such scenarios, the re-appearance of more capital-positing violences can indeed disrupt the smooth operation of this system and can have unpredictable outcomes that may not be beneficial for the imperial power. But settler colonies are expansionist, and once the settler colonial conquest is in motion, it is almost impossible to stop it from within the internal dynamics of the settler colony (i.e., it can only be halted by the resistance of the colonised and/or by an outside power). Settler colonial conquest begets more efforts at conquest until all of the lands of the expelled and dispossessed Indigenous people are stolen and

placed under exclusive settler colonial sovereignty. So, from the settler colonial worldview of Israel, its capital-positing violences are needed even if they do disrupt capital-generating systems. The argument for its imperial supporters being: Israeli capital-positing violences (which are themselves capital generating) have eventually bore many fruits for its imperial allies, and so will these ones in the long run as well.

What are those fruits for the imperial power's interests in the Middle East? Resources (namely, hydrocarbons), control of trade routes, access to markets, growth and development of European and North American financial and debt markets, intelligence gathering and sharing, a staging base for military operations, developing military capabilities through research and experimentation, and political interference in state affairs for the benefit of US global capital accumulation (Mansour 1994; Khalidi 2020; Hanieh 2021). The strategic alliance that has been producing these benefits for Israel and the US began to solidify and expand during the Cold War, but has continued well after the end of the Cold War precisely because Israel is a critical part of a US global capital accumulation system. The Cold War was a struggle for US capital accumulation. The US feared economic nationalisation and the rise of a robust and comprehensive welfare state in Arab countries, which would be designed for the benefit of the majority of people in the region, preferring instead neoliberal free market capitalism that largely benefited the US and its allies (Hanieh 2021: 38–42). This calculation has not disappeared since the end of the Cold War, and the US continues to see the Middle East as a critical region in its imperial project and in maintaining its global hegemony through the advancement of neoliberal economics. In this regard, Israel still continues to play a major role, and provides the US with great economic benefits (Hanieh 2021).

For the US empire, Israeli settler colonialism is a cash cow, not just in the aftermath of capital-positing violences, but in the practice of those violences themselves. Nowhere is this more visible than in the US empire's military support and relationship with Israel. Public discourse focuses much on US military 'aid' to Israel, which is estimated to be 159 billion dollars since 1946 (Congressional Research Service 2023) (300 billion when adjusted for inflation, Masters & Merrow 2024). But it is critical to underscore that many within political elite circles do not refer to this as 'aid' but rather as 'investment.' None other than US President Joe Biden has consistently over his career referred to US support for Israel as an 'investment' (Ayyash 2023a). How is it an investment? For starters, it is critical to underscore that 'Most of the aid — approximately \$3.3 billion a year — is provided as grants under the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program, funds that Israel must use to purchase U.S. military equipment and services' (Masters & Merrow 2024). The 'aid' immediately circles

back into the pockets of US firms, as it simultaneously further strengthens and expands the research and development of weapons for their partners in Israeli firms, who will in turn reach many other markets around the world, and so on.

As Israeli scholar Eytan Gilboa, who promotes the US-Israel alliance explains:

Use of the term ‘aid’ in the context of US-Israeli defence relations is misleading. The more accurate and appropriate term would be ‘investment’ that provides enormous profits for both sides. First, most of the resources are invested in the American defence industries towards acquisition of advanced weapons, and not in Israel. Washington receives ongoing critical intelligence from Jerusalem of major value, combat experience that tests and improves the weapons, joint development of weapons that are among the most sophisticated in the world, original and innovative technologies, and proven combat doctrines. Israel also works with the US in the areas of cyber warfare and nuclear proliferation. The scope of aid to Israel should be compared to US expenditure on defending its allies in other places in the world. . . . [T]he annual military aid to Japan costs some \$27 billion, the aid to Germany some \$21 billion, and to South Korea \$15 billion. The defence of Europe costs some \$36 billion. . . . In this respect, the value of military aid to Israel is much greater and contributes more to US national security than it seems. (Gilboa 2023: 480)

Adam Hanieh (2021: 39) further explains, “one former US intelligence officer has been quoted as claiming that the US-Israel military relationship was worth ‘five CIAs’ and that upkeep of an armed force equivalent to Israel’s in the Middle East would cost US taxpayers 125 billion dollars.” So, if the US empire benefits from capital-positing violences, then where are the tensions between US imperial and Israeli settler colonial interests?

Much like the British empire before it, the US empire is satisfied with a partition of the land between Palestinians and Israelis for two reasons. First, Israel already controls the majority of the land of Palestine, where 78% already falls under official Israeli sovereignty (i.e., ‘Israel proper’), approximately 60% of the West Bank (Area C) is under Israeli sovereignty in everything but name and Israel is continuously colonising more and more of those lands (and others in Area B), and now at least 32% of the Gaza Strip seems set to join that list of stolen lands. Second, in areas where there is some degree of Palestinian autonomy (whatever will remain of the Gaza Strip and Area A, which is approximately 18% of the West Bank), it is very limited, is not sovereignty, and is still under Israeli control. The US empire wants to see an end to Israeli expansion in those areas precisely because the Palestinian Authority is already structured along a neo-liberal capitalist framework that would allow for US capital accumulation in the restricted and discontinuous Palestinian territories

(Hanieh 2021). This Palestinian Authority would not resemble a real state: it would not enjoy full rights of self-determination, Euro-American style sovereignty, economic independence, the ability to form a military or a foreign policy, and would be entirely subservient to Israeli sovereignty (Eid 2023; Massad 2018; Erakat 2019). Such an outcome would allow the US empire to maintain 'stability' in the region by stating to its Arab allies, the authoritarian postcolonial regimes, that the US has secured a two-state solution, and that Arab states need to move forward from the Palestinian question, and focus all efforts and attention on full and official economic and political integration of Israel into the region (i.e., the Abraham Accords path).

Therefore, for the US empire, the settler colony of Israel is now secured in its conquest of the majority of the land of Palestine, and more conquest, though beneficial for the arms industry (and others), will also add instability to the region, which is not in the benefit of the US empire. For Israel, the settler colonial conquest was never fully completed and it seeks to finish the conquest of all of Palestine. The armed operation against Israel on October 7, 2023 provided the pretext that Israel needed to advance its settler colonial conquest and place more Palestinian lands under official exclusive Israeli Jewish sovereignty, defeat the Palestinian will to resist once and for all, and eliminate any remaining prospect of Palestinian sovereignty (Hawari 2023). This is the crux of capital-positing violences, but their scale, intensity, and scope mean that they can create high degrees of volatility and thus will likely have unpredictable consequences.

Capital-positing violences, such as this genocidal operation, are very difficult to conceal and obfuscate because they are so massive in scale (e.g., the displacement of almost the entire Palestinian population in the Strip of 2.3 million people), brutal in their intensity (e.g., according to *Al Jazeera*, as of June 13, 2024, at least 37,232 Palestinians have been killed and 85,037 wounded since October 7, 2023), and immensely destructive in their scope (e.g., the entire Gaza Strip is being made uninhabitable). Regular ideological tropes such as 'Israel has the right to defend itself,' 'this is a war between civilisation and barbarism,' 'critiquing Israel is antisemitic,' and so on, are no longer able to conceal such great violences, making it more difficult for the US empire and Israel to maintain their ideological hegemony in the international arena and among publics the world over, including those within the orbit of the US empire. Though this tension between the US and Israel is not only likely to continue but grow, the incentives for capital accumulation through both capital-positing and capital-preserving violences is likely to withstand efforts, from within these structures of colonial racial capitalism, to undo this colonial alliance.

Conclusion

The degradations of the US imperial hegemony are of course beneficial to its competitors, such as Russia, China, and others. Yet, even as these powers benefit from the weakening of US global ideological hegemony, and even as they participate in critiquing the US and Israel for the genocide, they nonetheless have not taken any material economic action to challenge the US and Israel and bring an end to the genocide. Granted, each state has its own domestic and foreign policy limitations, varying levels of economic, political, and/or military dependence on the US empire, political-economic challenges and obstacles, internal political rivalries, distinct social relations, etc., and therefore the specific reasons behind their inaction will be unique to each state. An analysis of why states in the Global South especially have not cut economic ties with the Israeli state deserves its own study. But I think it is important that such a study examine how colonial racial capitalism, as a common denominator in all states, underpins the explanation for each, and explore the material consequences for the majority of people in the Global South when their states continue to function within this system of colonial racial capitalism.

Earlier, I mentioned how the US's full support for the Israeli genocide is rational from within the worldview of US imperialism. But the irrationality of the 'rationality' of generating more capital through violence is that the more a power succeeds in generating capital through mass violence, the more it is likely to continue to engage in mass violence, the more likely it will be that it will meet its demise through violence. Since capital-preserving and capital-positing violences are circulatory, it means that colonial racial capitalism is a system that cannot but propagate mass violence, not just in Palestine but beyond. If people around the world want to move away from this path, then only the withdrawal of their participation from this system can suffice.

With mass grassroots attention and mobilisation focused on the Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people, the role of this genocide and Israeli settler colonialism in advancing US imperialism, mass discontent with economic inequality across the world, and the linkages being increasingly made across all sorts of oppressions in activist and non-activist spheres, there is an opening for a people power movement to turn the tide against the advancement of colonial racial capitalism. It is a rare moment in history, when people have the ability and the opening to turn their aspirations for an alternative mode of organising social, political, and economic life into a reality. Whether movements are able to emerge, seize this opportunity, and turn aspiration into reality remains to be seen, but it is what is necessary.

References

- Abdo, N. (2024) 'Israel's settler colonialism and the genocide in Gaza', *Studies in Political Economy*, 105 (1): 94–106.
- Ajl, M. (2023) 'Logics of Elimination and Settler Colonialism: Decolonization or National Liberation?' *Middle East Critique*, 32 (2): 259–83.
- Akman, B. (2024) 'Turkish Exports to Israel Plunge 99% After Trade Halted Over War', *BNN Bloomberg*, June 3, 2024: <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/turkish-exports-to-israel-plunge-99-after-trade-halted-over-war-1.2080352> (accessed June 4, 2024).
- AlJazeera* (2024) 'Biden signs law securing billions in US aid for Ukraine, Israel', *AlJazeera*, April 24, 2024: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/24/biden-signs-law-securing-billions-in-us-aid-for-ukraine-israel> (accessed June 4, 2024).
- Asrar, S., and Hussein, M. (2023) 'How the US has used its veto power at the UN in support of Israel', *AlJazeera*, October 26, 2023: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/26/how-the-us-has-used-its-veto-power-at-the-un-in-support-of-israel> (accessed June 4, 2024).
- Ayyash, M. (2018) 'An Assemblage of Decoloniality? Palestinian Fellahin Resistance and the Space-Place Relation', *Studies in Social Justice*, 12 (1): 21–37.
- (2023a) 'Biden says the U.S. would have to invent an Israel if it didn't exist. Why?' *The Conversation*, July 24, 2023: <https://theconversation.com/biden-says-the-u-s-would-have-to-invent-an-israel-if-it-didnt-exist-why-210172> (accessed May 31, 2024).
- (2023b) 'A genocide is under way in Palestine', *AlJazeera*, November 2, 2023: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/11/2/a-genocide-is-under-way-in-palestine> (accessed June 4, 2024).
- Baroud, R. (2024) 'Hypocrisy and genocide: How Gaza has exposed the West like never Before', *Middle East Monitor*, February 29, 2024: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240229-hypocrisy-and-genocide-how-gaza-has-exposed-the-west-like-never-before/> (accessed March 20, 2024).
- Bhambra, G. K. (2021) 'Colonial global economy: Towards a theoretical reorientation of political economy', *Review of International Political Economy*, 28 (2): 307–322.
- Byrd, J. A. (2011) *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
- Congressional Research Service (2023) 'U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel', March 1, 2023: <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf> (accessed May 31, 2024).
- Coulthard, G. (2014) *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
- Da'na, T. (2014) 'Disconnecting civil society from its historical extension: NGOs and neoliberalism in Palestine', in S. Takahashi (Ed.), *Human rights, human security, and state security: The intersection* (Oxford, England: Praeger): 117–138.
- Eid, H. (2023) *Decolonising the Palestinian Mind* (New Delhi, India: LeftWord Books).
- Erakat, N. (2019) *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
- Gilboa, E. (2023) 'US-Israel relations at 75', *Israel Affairs*, 29 (3): 473–491.
- Hanieh, A. (2021) 'The Political Economy of State Formation in Palestine', in L. Farsakh (Ed.), *Rethinking Statehood in Palestine: Self-Determination and Decolonization beyond Partition* (Oakland: University of California Press): 29–53.

- Hawari, Y. (2023) 'Israel's evacuation order is nothing but cover for ethnic cleansing', *Aljazeera*, October 16, 2023: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/10/16/israels-evacuation-order-is-nothing-but-cover-for-ethnic-cleansing> (accessed June 4, 2024).
- Hoffman, J. (2024) 'Israel Is a Strategic Liability for the United States', *Foreign Policy*, March 22, 2024: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/03/22/israel-gaza-biden-netanyahu-security-united-states/> (accessed May 29, 2024).
- Hogan, A. (2020) 'Competing Administrations in Palestine: Imperial Power and Settler Regimes in the British Empire', *The Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies*, 19 (2): 191–209.
- Ince, O. U. (2018) *Colonial Capitalism and the Dilemmas of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Khalidi, R. (2020) *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017* (New York: Metropolitan Books).
- Kestler-D'Amours, J., and Stepansky, J. (2024) 'Defies logic': The makings of Joe Biden's 'blank cheque' to Israel," *Aljazeera*, January 30, 2024:<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2024/1/30/defies-logic-the-makings-of-joe-bidens-blank-cheque-to-israel> (accessed May 29, 2024); and "'Strategic interests' and lobby power: The influences behind Biden's support for Israel," *Aljazeera*, January 30, 2024: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2024/1/30/strategic-interests-lobby-power-what-influences-bidens-israel-support> (accessed May 29, 2024).
- Koshy, S., Cacho, L. M., Byrd, J. A., and Jefferson, B. J. (2022) *Colonial Racial Capitalism* (Durham & London: Duke University Press).
- Liebermann, O., Bertrand, N., and Lendon, B. (2023) 'US sending second carrier strike group, fighter jets to region as Israel prepares to expand Gaza operations', *CNN*, October 15, 2023: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/14/middleeast/us-aircraft-carrier-eisenhower-israel-gaza-intl-hnk-ml/index.html> (accessed June 4, 2024).
- Mansour, C. (1994) *Beyond Alliance: Israel in US Foreign Policy*, Trans. J. A. Cohen (New York: Columbia University Press).
- Masalha, N. (2007) *The Bible and Zionism: Invented Traditions, Archaeology and Post-Colonialism in Israel-Palestine* (London & New York: Zed Books).
- Massad, J. (2018) 'Against Self-determination', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 9 (2): 161–191.
- Masters, J., and Merrow, W. (2024) 'U.S. Aid to Israel in Four Charts', Council on Foreign Relations, April 11, 2024: <https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts> (accessed May 31, 2024).
- Munck, R., and Pozzi, P. (2019) 'Israel, Palestine, and Latin America: Conflictual Relationships', *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 226, 46 (3): 4–12.
- Pappe, I. (2018) *Israel* (London: Routledge).
- Puar, J. K. (2017) *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham & London: Duke University Press).
- Robinson, C. J. ([1983] 2020) *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (3rd edition, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press).

- Sabbagh-Khoury, A. (2023) *Colonizing Palestine: The Zionist Left and the Making of the Palestinian Nakba* (California: Stanford University Press).
- Salhani, J. (2024) 'Israel has encroached on 32% of Gaza, Al Jazeera investigation shows', *Al-Jazeera*, May 31, 2024: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/31/israel-has-encroached-on-32-of-gaza-al-jazeera-investigation-shows> (accessed June 4, 2024).
- Sinanoglou, P. (2019) *Partitioning Palestine: British Policymaking at the End of Empire* (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press).
- Takahashi, S. J. (2024) 'Gaza will be the grave of the Western-led world order', *AlJazeera*, January 17, 2024: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/1/17/gaza-will-be-the-grave-of-the-western-led-world-order> (accessed March 20, 2024).
- Veracini, L. (2010) *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Wolfe, P. (2006) 'Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8 (4): 387–409.